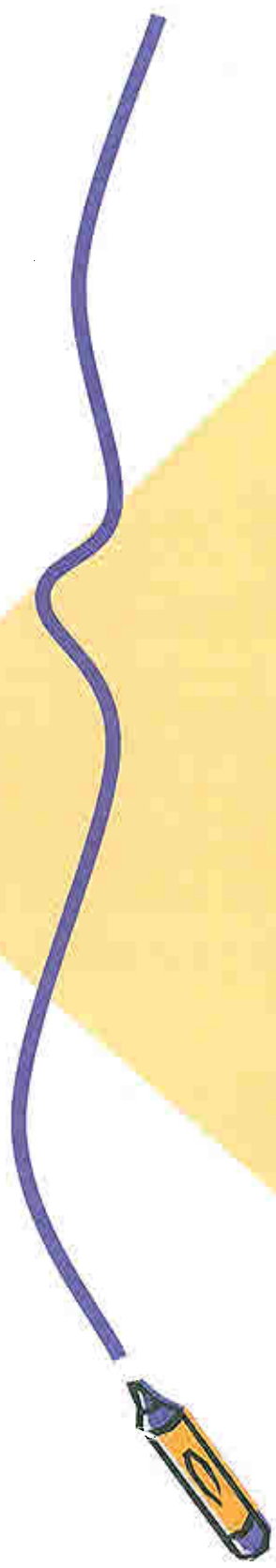




# Families and Children Task Force Overview and Findings

May 8, 2008



# History and Charge

- Task Force created by Council resolution on July 21, 2007
- The Task Force was charged to:
  - Consider a set of questions and concerns, including child care issues, appropriate/affordable housing, and transportation;
  - Examine best practices in peer cities and in literature; and
  - Make policy recommendations to the City Council



# Organization and Meetings

- The Task Force divided the work of the charge into two subcommittees.
  - Child Care Subcommittee
  - Housing Subcommittee ( Housing, Parks/Amenities, Schools )
- Monthly Task Force meetings.
- Additional monthly subcommittee meetings.



# Methodology

- Consensus of Task Force was to focus on issues related to Families and Children in Austin's urban core
- Urban core is defined by:
  - US Hwy 183 to the North and East
  - Ben White to the South
  - Mopac to the West

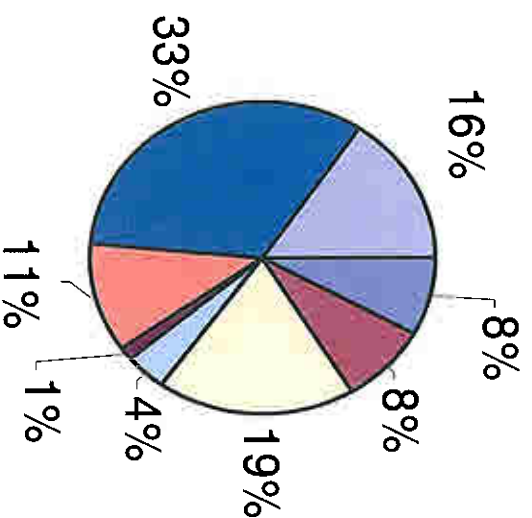


# Survey

- Created an online survey to attain information from citizens in Austin
- March 2008
- 1060 respondents
  - 857 families with children under 18
  - 203 families without children under 18



# Survey Question: Geographic Location

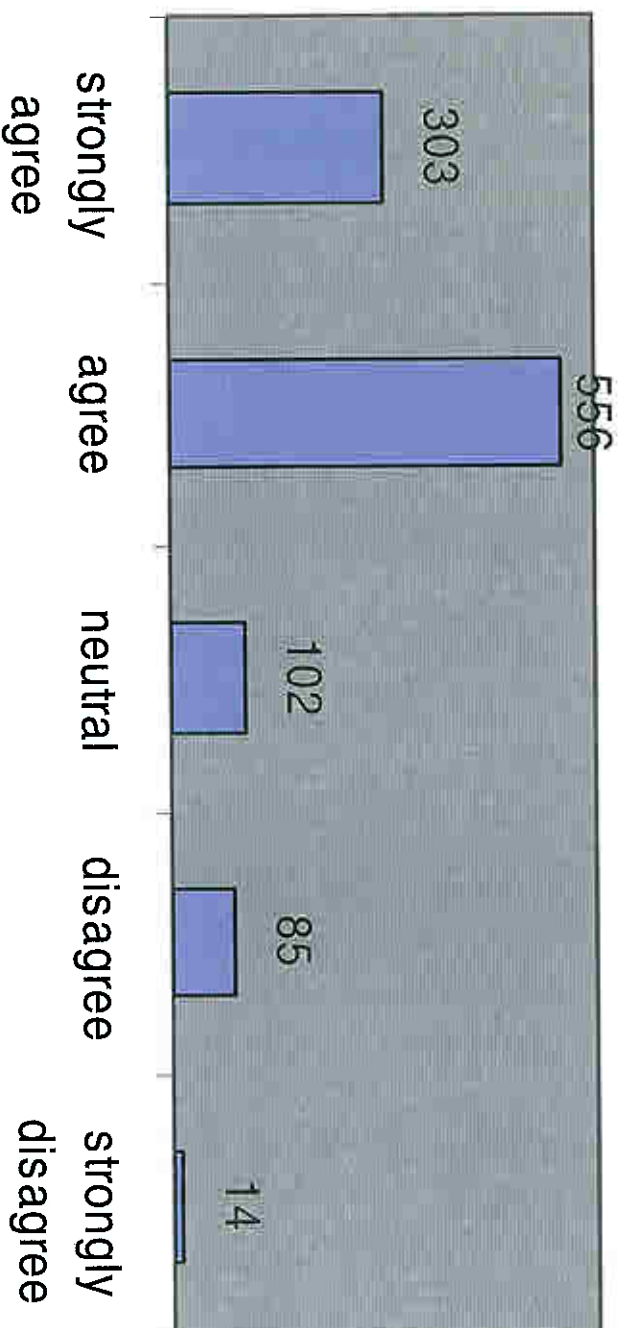


# Survey Results

- Top Concerns:
  - Child care
  - Affordable housing
  - Sidewalks and bike lanes
  - Public transportation
  - Public schools
  - Parks and pools



# Survey Question: Neighborhood Safety



# Findings Related to Child Care Services: Trends

- More than 50% of families with children aged 3-5 in Travis County need full-time child care.
- Approx. 2,800 children are receiving subsidized child care.
- Child care capacity in Travis County has stayed constant at approx. 41,000 openings, but there is a general trend for child care centers to be closing in the central core and moving to the suburbs.
- Child care quality is improving; of particular note are the efforts of United Way Capital Area's Success By 6.
- Child care costs continue to rise: between 2005 and 2006, average cost of full-time care for children aged infant to 3 years rose by nearly \$300, to \$636/month in Travis Co.



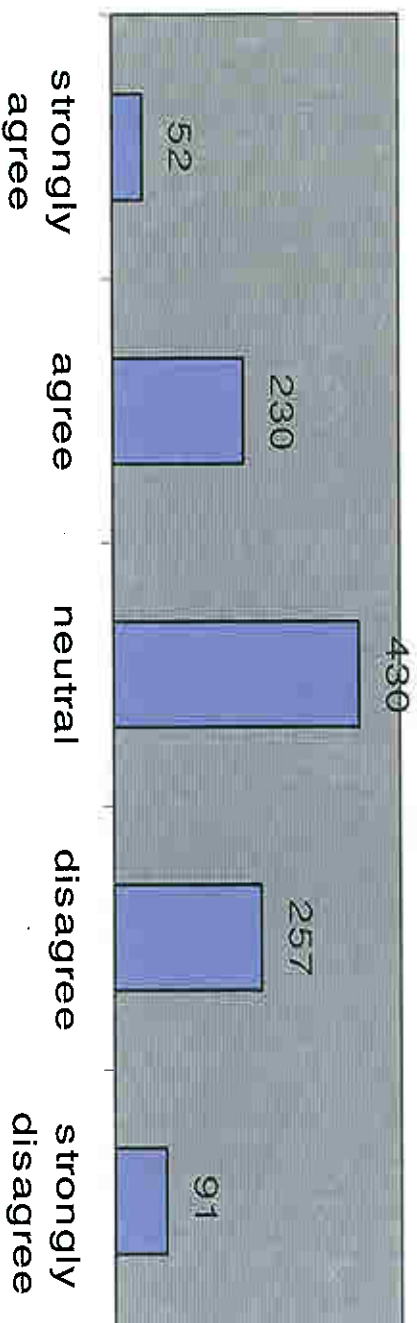
# Findings Related to Child Care Services

- FCTF survey found that more respondents were dissatisfied with the supply of quality child care in Austin than were satisfied.
- Survey noted that lack of affordable, quality child care services in Austin was a top concern.
- Three focus groups were held by Task Force members, including one with low-income students at ACC.
  - Almost all of the participants agreed that families' lack of access to quality, affordable child care is one of the top problems facing families in the community.



# Findings Related to Child Care Services - State of Child Care Services In Austin

I am satisfied with the supply of quality child care in Austin



# Findings Related to Child Care Services-Economic Development Model

- New research indicates that childcare is an important piece of the infrastructure of a city and plays a critical role in the local economy.
- Availability of quality, affordable child care services affects the productivity and satisfaction of the local workforce; it affects the local economy, and it provides a measurable return on investment.



# Findings Related to Child Care Services-Further Research and

## Analysis Needed

- Recommend long-term forecasting of child care need based on planned city growth and expansion.
- Many cities and states have invested in similar studies including the states of Kansas; Vermont; Rhode Island; New York; and Maine; as well as local areas such as Minneapolis; Long Island; and San Antonio.



# Findings Related to Child Care Services - History of Previous

## Recommendations

- Recommendations from previous efforts (including Child Care Council, Jan. 8, 2008) have common themes:
  - Importance of the quality of child care.
  - Need for families, especially low-income families, to have access to that care.
  - Need for adequate funding of child care.
  - Desire for City policies and supports that allow child care to be part of neighborhoods and included in new development.



# Findings Related to Housing

- Land Use and Planning Policies can be improved to enhance quality of life for families with children and promote family-friendly neighborhoods.
- The planning process should incorporate national best practices to make Austin one of the top family-friendly cities in the country.
- Incorporating the views of children should be a priority in the planning process.



# Findings Related to Housing

- Affordable housing is a primary factor in multiple issues related to families with children in Austin.
- Lack of affordable housing was cited as one of the top concerns in the survey.
- Family-friendly housing should include affordable units and provide adequate square footage and number of bedrooms.



# Findings Related to Housing

- The City should consider a pilot family-friendly development project.
- Other cities have established Family-Friendly Design Standards
  - including such features as shared streets, unit design, play areas, child accessibility, privacy, safety and security, and traffic calming.

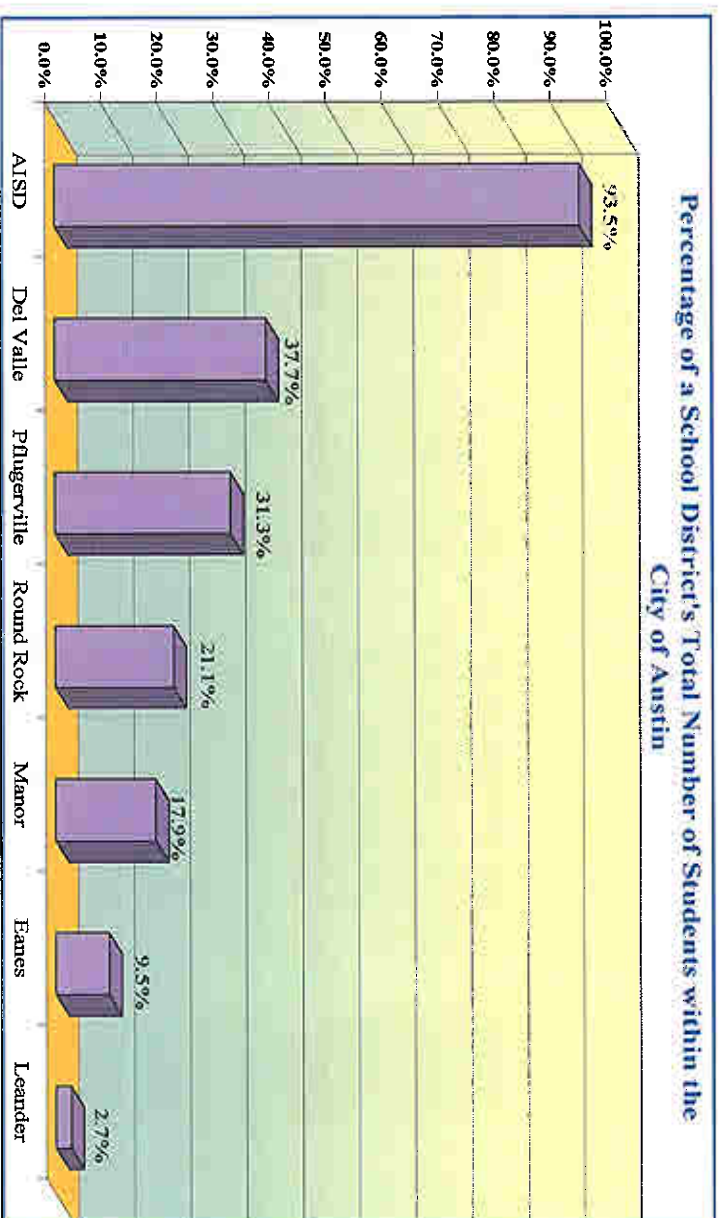


# Findings Related to School Districts

- Eight school districts are represented within the city limits of Austin ( Austin ISD, Del Valle ISD, Eanes ISD, Hays CSD, Leander ISD, Manor ISD, Pflugerville ISD, and Round Rock ISD )
- Approximately 93 percent of the students in Austin ISD live within the Austin city limits.



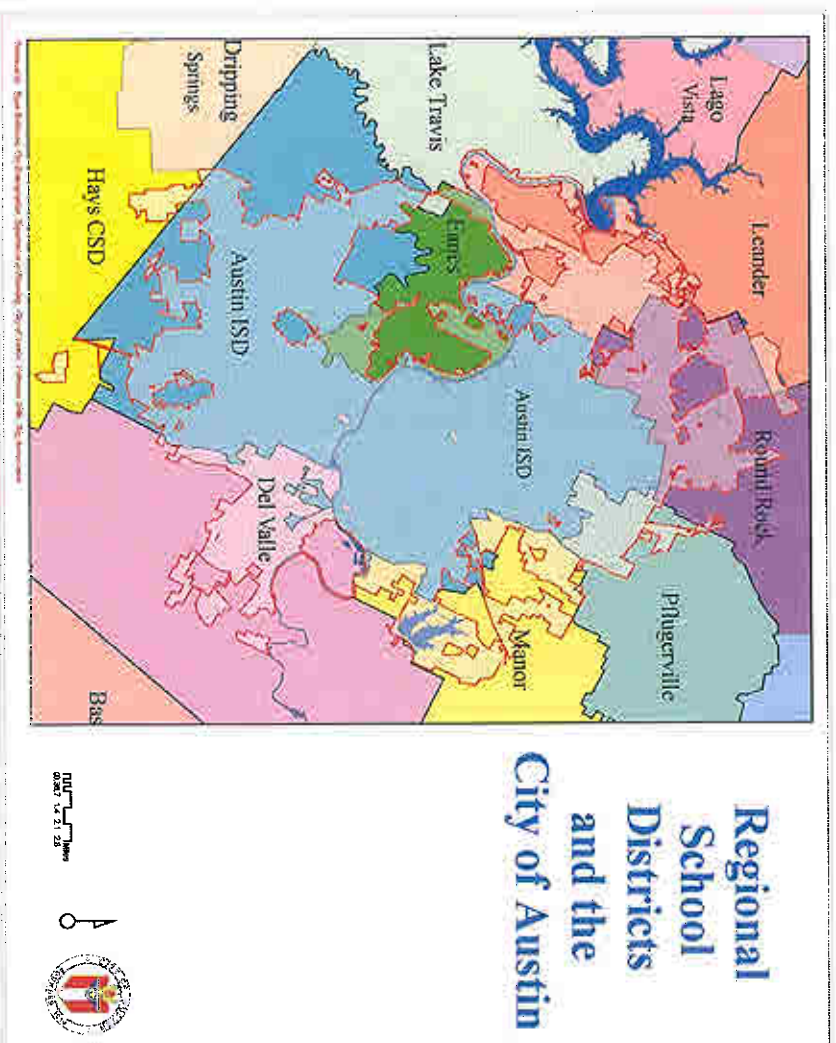
# Findings Related To School Districts



Source: Office of the City Demographer, Austin



# Findings Related to School Districts



Source: Office of the City Demographer, Austin



# Findings Related to School Districts

Key finding:

- Perception of the quality of neighborhood schools is a major factor in the decision to purchase a home.



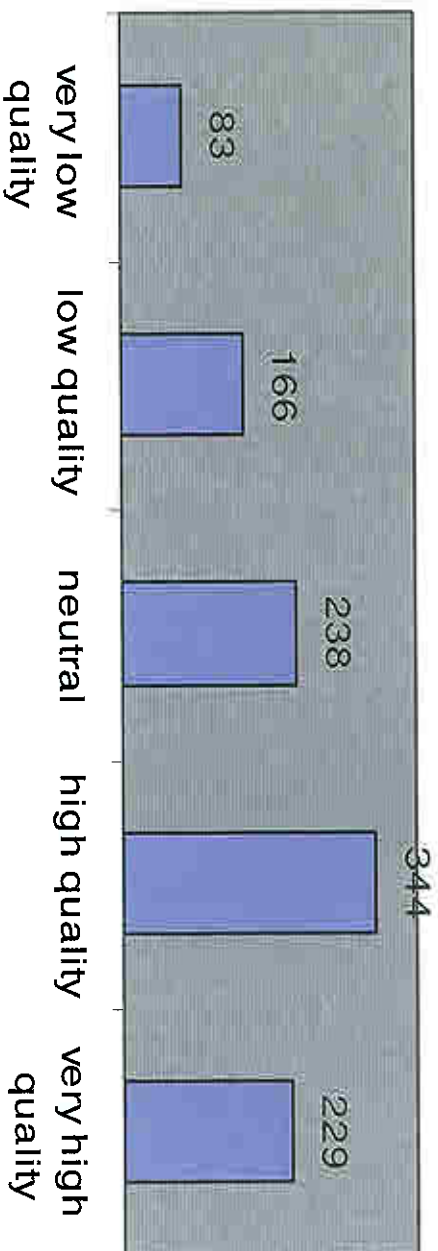
# Findings Related To School Districts

- The community perception of the quality of Austin schools is generally good.
- More than half of survey respondents rated their neighborhood elementary school as "high quality" or "very high quality."
- The perception of quality at secondary schools—middle and high schools—is considerably less.



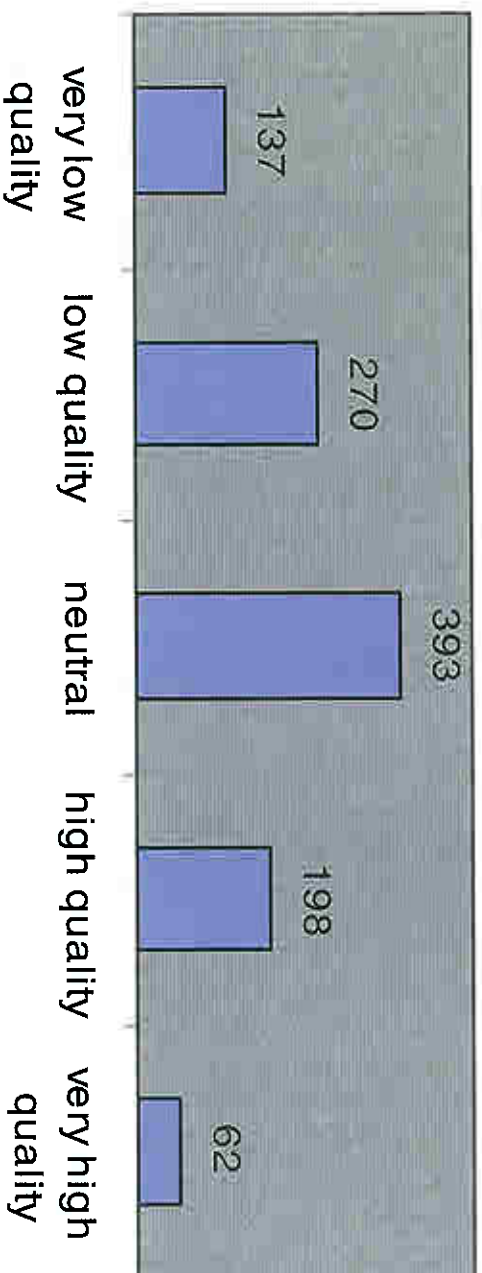
# Findings Related To School Districts

What is your perception of the quality of  
your neighborhood elementary school?



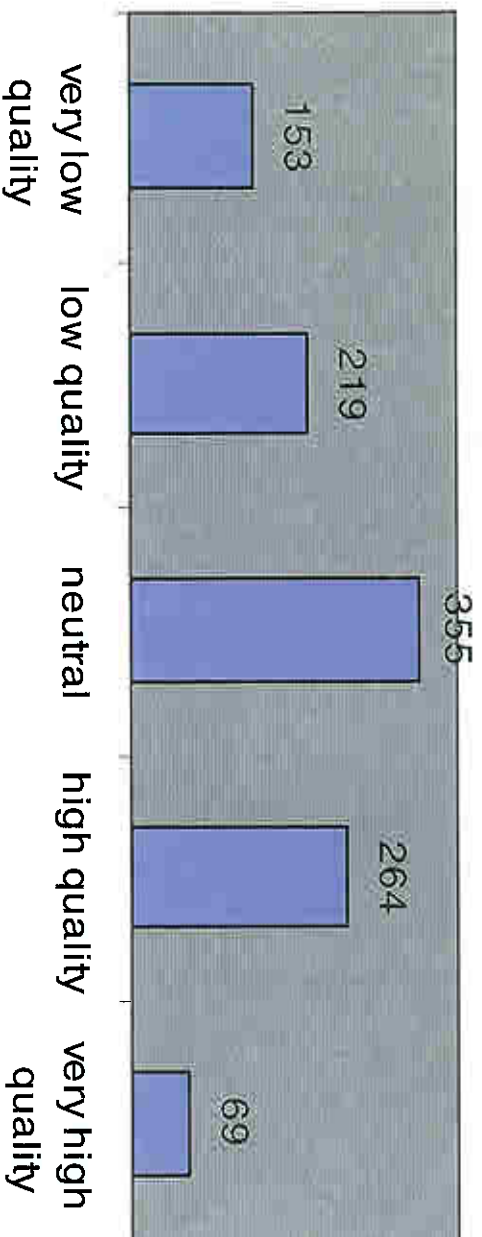
# Findings Related To School Districts

What is your perception of the quality of your  
neighborhood middle school?



# Findings Related To School Districts

What is your perception of the quality of your  
neighborhood high school?



# Findings Related To School Districts

- Austin families have a clear preference and expectation for neighborhood-based schools.
- The implementation of neighborhood-based schools at the elementary school level is relatively good although there are challenges in older and denser neighborhoods.
- The perception of neighborhood schools at the secondary school level can be improved and is largely related to school tracking patterns.



# Findings Related To School Districts

- Planning between school districts and the City of Austin is not perceived to be tightly integrated.
- The only formal planning link between the City and Austin ISD is found in the City Charter stating the President of the Austin ISD school board is an *ex-officio* member of the Planning Commission.
- There does not appear to be a formal link between the City of Austin and other city school districts.
- City staff regularly meets with school district staff.



# Findings Related To School Districts

- School districts should be active partners in all planning efforts (while maintaining a primary focus on education).
- The City should consider an “educational impact” statement for new development, to provide information on how the development will impact either existing or planned schools.
- Impact fees, similar to fees collected for parks, are used by other cities to fund schools and related facilities.
- Joint, or cooperative, use of facilities should be an expectation of school, city, and county governing bodies.



# Findings Related To Parks and Amenities

- Austin families clearly value the City's many outdoor amenities for families.
- Zilker Park and the city's other parks and green spaces made the top of the "best of" list in the Task Force Survey.
- A top concern from the survey is lack of sidewalks and bike lanes in city neighborhoods.



# Findings Related To Parks and Amenities

- There is a need to provide additional financial support for parks and indoor recreational space acquisition, enhancements, and maintenance.
- Many families want to be able to walk or bike to their neighborhood park, school, or local stores.
- The Downtown area has approximately 19 acres of parkland.





Questions?

